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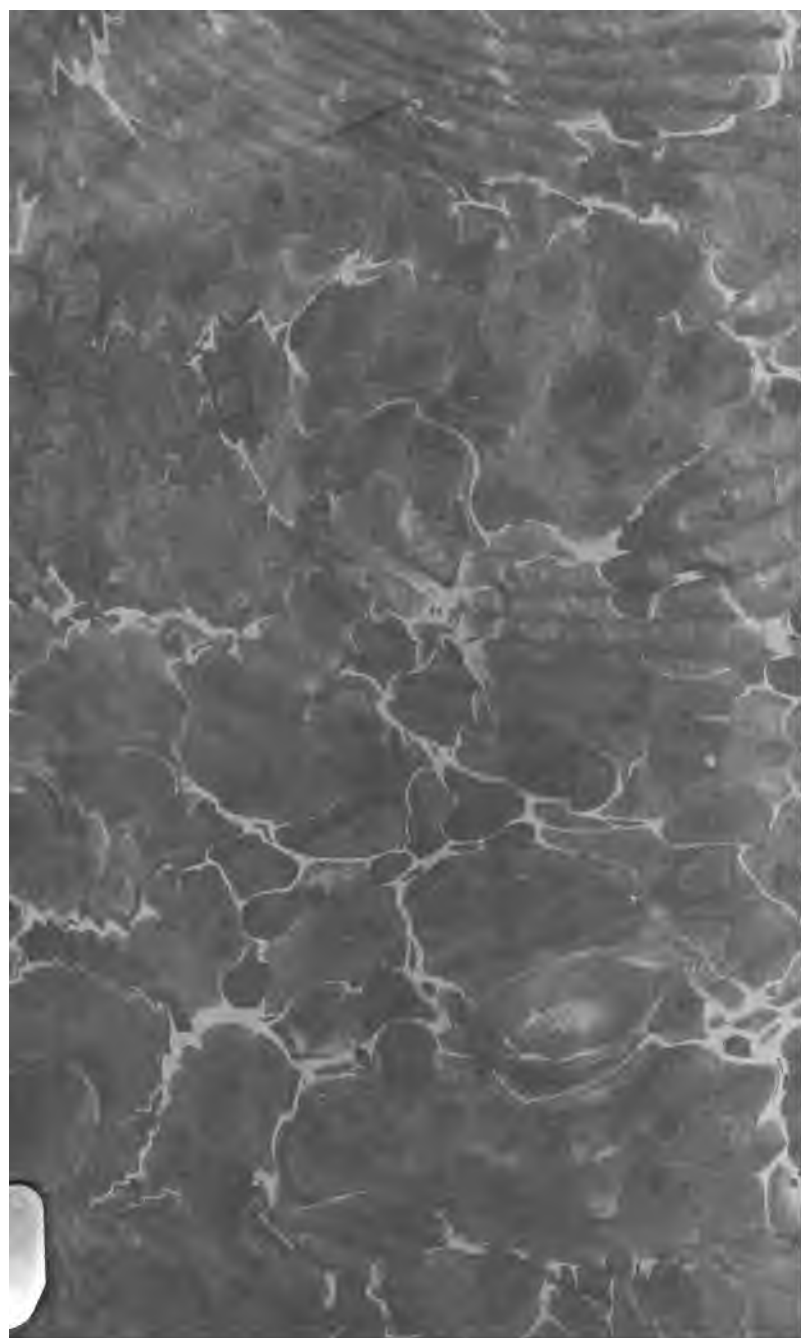
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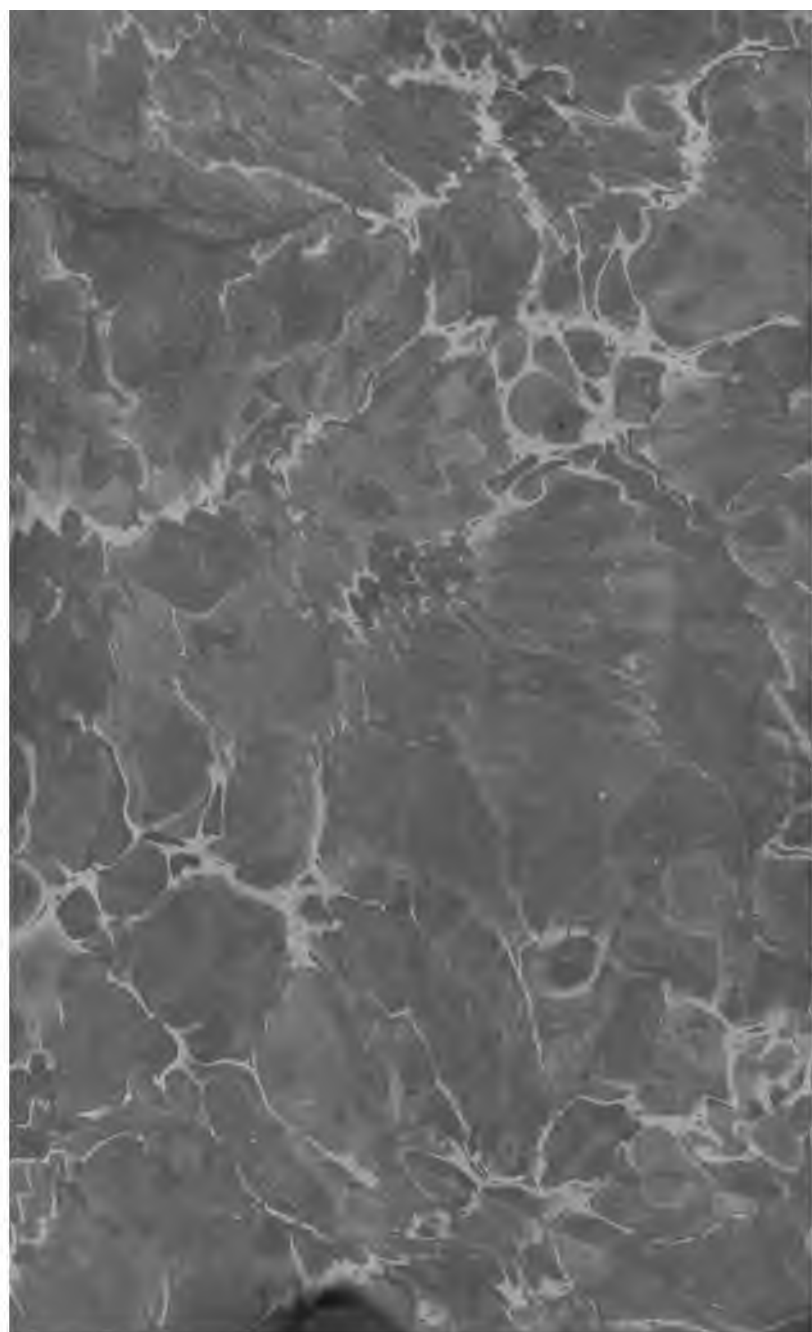
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ESSAYS AND POEMS

WHITE





L16

ESSAYS AND POEMS

By
HENRY KELSEY WHITE





Henry White

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By
HENRY KELSEY WHITE

EDITED BY
LIONEL S. BIRCH

HULL
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PREFATORY MEMOIR

HENRY KELSEY WHITE, whose sudden death occurred on August 16, 1906, in his thirty-sixth year, was widely recognised as an enthusiastic lover and student of literature, and as a man of exceptional intellectual attainments.

He left behind him a quantity of manuscript—papers written for various Literary Societies, critical and biographical essays, which bear witness to his scholarly appreciation of favourite authors (of whom Shakespeare stood first and foremost in his affections)—together with a number of poems which will favourably bear comparison with most “minor” verse, and which reflect the thought and feeling of one to whom life was full of interest and the world full of beauty.


From this material, the best, ripest, and most suitable has been chosen, and is offered in the present volume ; it being felt that the real literary value of these *Essays and Poems* is such as to both fully merit their publication in this form, and win appreciation not only among those who knew the writer, but in a wider circle of literature lovers.

His death in the full bloom and promise of early manhood—"Ere time had gathered in her ripest sheaves"—has left the world the poorer by a remarkably charming personality and by a thinker and a strenuous worker, whose influence in his short career has been great and deep both within and without his own religious ministration—an influence helpful, real, and essentially for good.

Born at Cleethorpes, September 13, 1870, he was educated at Coatham Grammar School, and after serving for a few years as assistant schoolmaster at Hull, he entered the Unitarian Home Missionary College, Manchester. He spent three years at Owens College, Manchester, and in July 1901 became pastor of the Unitarian Church at Urmston. He was married in 1903. After four years' ministry at Urmston he accepted a call to Richmond Hill Church, Ashton-under-Lyne, where fifteen months later his death took place, following an operation for appendicitis. His remains were interred in the graveyard of Dukinfield Old Chapel, and to many who followed him to his last resting-place the words of his best loved poet must have occurred—with painful force to those most intimate in his friendship:

"We shall not look upon his like again."

Uniting a rare sensibility to a fine and catholic culture, literature had for him a never-failing interest and delight. The reality of its message to him, no less than the verity and range of his knowledge of



letters, is especially evidenced in such an essay as that on "Literature and Social Progress." In the work of our nation's poets, major and minor, from Chaucer to Herrick, from Sidney to Byron, from the Elizabethan lyrists and dramatists to the singers of our own time, he was deeply versed; and here, in the sphere of poetry, he found his most peculiar joy, interest, and inspiration. The subtle charm and fragrance of lyric or ballad, the flower-like beauty of a sonnet—captured in the ordered lines like that of a rose in its enfolded petals—the rarities and delicacies of music and fancy in which dwells the soul of poetry, never thrilled to intellectual and spiritual rapture a more finely responsive nature than that of the author of the following pages; nor, it may be added, found more expressive interpretation than through his elocutionary skill.

Dramatic poetry, in its function of "holding the mirror up to nature" and reflecting the life and character of humanity, was to him no less a wonder-world pregnant with interest; and in the following essays some of the fruits of his loving analysis and study are garnered for us.


In compiling the *Sir Philip Sidney*, *John Donne*, and *Thomas Lodge*, *Robert Greene*, and *Samuel Daniel* numbers of the "Orinda" and "Pembroke" series of booklets, our poet-lover found a congenial task; and in his prefaces to these dainty and useful books he gives evidence of a keen and cultured appreciation and critical acumen no less than of his anthological

enthusiasm. The last-named of these was in the press when its editor's sudden death occurred, and it bears a dedication to his memory.

A *Shakespeare Song-Index* was another useful contribution of this worshipper of the Bard ; and two or three essays in pamphlet form, and verses from his pen in magazines and periodicals, have appeared at various times, some of which work—in slightly amended form—is here given a more permanent setting. Other literary ventures were left incomplete, and budding schemes—notably a blank-verse romantic drama—robbed of their fruition.

Though the prose and poetical material here incorporated bears undeniable evidence of ripe thought and of skilled artistry and workmanship, it must yet be taken, in view of the writer's death at so early an age, as but the promise of " what might have been." These papers were all written (with the exception of the one entitled " Woman in Shakespeare " which was first drafted—though subsequently revised—in 1896) between the years 1901 and 1903, the earliest of the poems dating back to 1890; the more artistic and certain touch of later work being responsible for the larger selection of the included pieces being chosen therefrom.

Their expression is that of a contemplative and philosophical mind, serious and earnest, yet often warming to ardour and enthusiasm, or lightly dallying with some tender memory or fancy ; responsive to the spells of nature, and dominated by an eager human interest and love and reverence for the divine. They



often charm with beauty of "fine-fil'd phrase," and with music of rhythm and cadence; and although by no means poor in originality, the student of poetry will doubtless detect in some of them the influence—in certain cases the probably conscious imitation—of such writers as Tennyson, Wordsworth, and Swinburne.

Fortunate in the rare friendship of the man and the mind-communion of the book-lover, it has been for the writer a labour of love to prepare these *Essays and Poems* for publication, and it is hoped that in their present form they will be deemed a suitable and representative memorial of their author; the volume being offered in the assurance that its material will be found intrinsically worthy of preservation, and that to all those who cherish the memory of a personal association, it will bring a welcome echo of

"The sound of a voice that is still."

LIONEL S. BIRCH.

URMSTON,
April 1907.

ESSAYS

SHAKESPEARE AS A RELIGIOUS TEACHER

To the question: Is Shakespeare a religious poet and teacher? what other answer can we give than an emphatic *Yea*?

Let me quote the words of Mr. Walter Bagehot, who, in his *Estimates of Some Englishmen and Scotchmen*, has thus admirably silenced the querists:

“ If the underlying and almighty essence of this world be good, then it is likely that the writer who most deeply approached to that essence will be himself good. There is a religion of week-days as well as of Sundays, a religion of ‘ cakes and ale ’ as of pews and altar-cloths. This England lay before Shakespeare as it lies before us all, with its green fields, and its long hedgerows, and its many trees, and its great towns, and its endless hamlets, and its motley society, and its long history, and its bold exploits, and its gathering power; and he saw that they were good. To him, perhaps more than to any one else, has it been given to see that they were a great unity, a great religious object; that if you could only descend to the inner life, to the deep things, to the secret principles of its noble vigour, to the essence

of character . . . we might, so far as we are capable of so doing, understand the nature which God has made. Let us not, then, think of him as a teacher of dry dogmas, or a sayer of hard sayings, but as—

‘a priest to us all

Of the wonder and bloom of the world’—

a teacher of the hearts of men and women.”

Yes; we must recognise in Shakespeare the priest, the teacher, the most truly religious of all poets. And here we are reminded of that noble lesson in religious tolerance which, impelled by the wrongs of centuries, bursts like a storm-wind from the lips of Shylock as he voices for all time the cry of a despised and persecuted Jewdom: “Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?” (*Merchant of Venice*, Act III. Sc. 1).

Have we not here Jewish Emancipation anticipated by over two centuries? Ruskin has somewhere defined the greatest artist as “he who has embodied in the sum of his works the greatest number of the greatest ideas.” In similar terms may we not define the greatest teacher as he who has embodied in the

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sum of his teaching the greatest number of the deepest truths respecting the human heart and the human soul?

Tried by this standard, I know only One—and He surely needs no naming here—who takes a higher place among the teachers of the hearts of men and women.

What has been most helpful, most inspiring, and most uplifting in ourselves, we desire—if we have that true love for our fellows which is enjoined upon us not only by our deepest instincts but also by the most profound and convincing teachers of mankind—to impart to others. And let me here confess that, next to the Bible—the most priceless of all treasures of human thought and expression—there is no book that has wrought so effectually for good with me as has this storehouse of wisdom, truth, pathos and beauty. I can gratefully re-affirm the testimony of Wilhelm Meister, and say with him, “All the anticipations I have ever had regarding man and his destiny, which have accompanied me from youth upwards, often unobserved by myself, I find developed and fulfilled in Shakespeare’s writings.” I would here emphasise, as solemnly as I may, the necessity of our putting before our children, at their most impressionable age, the highest examples which the best literature can furnish for their reading and the training of their character. Let a child be taught to love good books—fine poetry and pure elevating prose—and he will carry that love for them throughout his life. The mean and the paltry, the trivial and the evanescent, will have little or no attraction for him when years

bring the spirit of discretion and discrimination, and the mind looks out for the food that is most truly to nourish it and to build it up.

Now, it is true that there are those, even among grown men and women—and men and women, too, of fine intellect and strong mental powers—to whom poetry makes no appeal. But these are, I fancy, the rare exceptions. For poetry clothes in speech the deepest emotions of the soul. It speaks to the divinest that is in us. Yet often the poet is circumscribed in the area of his thought and in the subject-matter of his verse. And thus only those of a particular nature or temperament find pleasure or attractiveness in what he writes. It is Shakespeare's story that he speaks to all. He is the poet of Universal Life. There is no aspect of our manifold existence, no condition of our human lot, no emotion, no situation, none of the infinite variety of our life, that he has not pictured for us. He "comes in," as one has remarked, "at all our windows."

"All pains the immortal spirit must endure,

All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow."

Yes; and all the moral glory and excellence that are Man's find place in his illuminating page. He has "tears and laughter for all time." He weeps with them that weep, he rejoices with them that rejoice.

His book is thus a perfect mirror of the great Heart of Mankind. Life as it is, life as it might be—the real and the ideal: both these are here. His is

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the vision of the seer who looks with all-embracing eye—the vision of the world of thought and feeling and action stretched out before us.

And so his wondrous catholicity of thought and feeling enabled him to enter into every variety of emotion and experience. He is Hamlet and the Gravedigger, Lear and his Fool, Othello and Iago, Juliet and her Nurse, Cordelia and Goneril, Wolsey and Touchstone, Rosalind and Lady Macbeth, Portia and Desdemona, Romeo and the Apothecary, Macbeth and Benedick, Prospero and Falstaff, Shylock and Orlando, Timon and Dogberry. Each in turn, and each with perfect truth to life.

This is the poet to whom we look for the surest guidance in the difficult ways of the world; the man who is instinct with the feeling of our universal life, the musician of speech who has

“touched on all the notes
God set between His After and Before;”

who can reveal to us the hidden workings of the human heart and show us life at all its many points, in all its various and its subtle phases.

And note that he does it without any parade of teaching. He does it in the way of the true teacher: not by making us feel that he is instructing us by laboured precepts, by little codes of rules, or by the retailing of the pretty wares of morality, neatly parcelled out and showily displayed; he touches us with those fine forces of the world which are its divine

motive powers, and brings to bear upon us the deeper influencings of life. Would you learn—he would seem to say to us—what is in the heart of the man or woman who is placed in such or such a position, who acts thus or thus, who has found heaven or hell here and now? “Look upon this picture and on this!” And we know, by an unerring instinct, that the possibilities of our own heart and life are being laid bare before us. And the man who can do this has learnt the sweetest of all lessons—that of infinite human kindliness and charity. See with what a delicate and tender touch he sketches for us this dainty but most faithful cameo of our earthly history: “The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together: our virtues would be proud if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair if they were not cherished by our virtues” (*All's Well*, Act IV. Sc. 3).

Does not the experience of each one of us teach us the refreshing truth of this every day we live? Would we learn the true principle of life's greatness? Hamlet, in his deep heart-searchings, has discovered it for us. And this prophet of Wisdom and Truth has put it into undying speech—the noblest (as one has said) that poet has ever pronounced:

“Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw,
When honour's at the stake.”

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While, in the ever-memorable words of Duke Vincentio in *Measure for Measure*, he has reminded us in what high and holy trust we hold that life which is the Almighty's precious gift to all :

“Thyself and thy belongings
Are not thine own so proper, as to waste
Thyself upon thy virtues, they on thee.
Heaven doth with us, as we with torches do :
Not light them for themselves ; for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touch'd,
But to fine issues : nor nature never lends
The smallest scruple of her excellence,
But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines
Herself the glory of a creditor,
Both thanks and use.”

If every heart were but deeply touched with the truth of that great utterance, what a different world it would be for every one of us !

Would we know the vanity of worldly pomp, and how its mockeries have been revealed to the man who has bartered his soul for them—only to find them dust and ashes at the last, we need only go to the man who has

“trod the ways of glory,
And sounded all the depths of honour,”

and he will tell us his verdict, given in no unmistak-

able tone, and with the bitter feeling of the utter emptiness of it all :

“ This is the state of man ; to-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hope, to-morrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him :
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost ;
And,—when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is a ripening,—nips his root.
And then he falls, as I do. I have ventured,
Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,
This many summers in a sea of glory ;
But far beyond my depth : my high-blown pride
At length broke under me ; and now has left me,
Weary, and old with service, to the mercy
Of a rude stream, that must for ever hide me.
Vain pomp, and glory of this world, I hate ye ;
I feel my heart new opened : O, how wretched
Is that poor man, that hangs on prince’s favours !
There is, betwixt that smile we would aspire to,
That sweet aspect of princes, and their ruin,
More pangs and fears than wars or women have ;
And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer,
Never to hope again.”

And then, as we listen to this fallen man’s solemn charge to Cromwell, we seem to catch, in those pregnant words, an echo of that same Higher Voice which spake, fifteen hundred years before, from Olivet :
“ Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth,
where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves

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break through and steal : but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."

It is a trumpet-call to Virtue and nobler living from one who had ever set his heart upon those things of earth, and had dallied with the higher things of the spirit :

"Love thyself last : cherish those hearts that hate thee ;

Corruption wins not more than honesty.

Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace,

To silence envious tongues. Be just, and fear not :

Let all the ends thou aim'st at, be . . .

Thy God's, and truth's."

Or we may take that other verdict—of the man whose heart had been set on the fleeting sovereignty of earthly power, and whose soul had been filled with an ambition made up of the trivial stuff of an unrighteous yearning. It comes to us as a miserable moan—the utterance of a life that is going down to "dusty death" in remorse, and pessimism, and despair :

"Out, out, brief candle !


Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,

And then is heard no more. It is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,

Signifying nothing."



Such words, and such a life, must needs "give pause" to every reflecting mind. Their moral cannot be missed by the heart that has any feeling after the good and the true.

And so one might go on, finding these lessons of faith and duty on every page of this poet's Book of Life. And we should learn from him that so-much-needed lesson which he has taught us through the mouth of the exiled Duke in Arden: to find some "good in everything"; yes, as his own Harry of England assures we may, if we will but look for it "observingly," even "in things evil." And what a grand thing that is to learn!

But for me—and I suppose for all—the loveliest and most ennobling lessons that Shakespeare has to teach us come to us out of the hearts and lives of the women with whom he has bejewelled the crown of his inestimable gift to the world. He was the first to show to us all the beauty and the richness, all the grandeur and the glory, all the infinite possibilities, that speak to us out of the soul of woman. And who could say how richer and better the world is for those pictures of maidenly modesty, of filial piety, of wifely devotion, of motherly tenderness, of willing sacrifice, of patient fidelity, of unconquerable faith, of redemptive grace? They have done more than anything else in the world's literature to sweeten and purify the atmosphere of our life of thought and feeling and endeavour.

"Every day," said Tennyson to one who sought

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his advice upon reading, "you must read something from the Bible and something from Shakespeare. The one will teach you how to speak to God, and the other how to speak to man." Shall we not rather say that each will do both? For if, as Henry Morley has said, "the highest literature is expression of the highest life," then in the pages of Shakespeare, too, we may find that passion for prayer and high incentive to godly living which teaches us to speak to God, as we read in them the lessons of trust and hope and love.

After the "Golden Rule" of Jesus, and all that it implies, there is nothing higher in the uttered wisdom of the world than the closing sentence of Polonius' advice to Laertes:

"This above all—to thine own self be true:
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

This, then, would seem to be Shakespeare's message to us all—the sum of his teaching upon the great issues of life and the soul:

"Love God; love your neighbour; do your work."

If we read him aright, we shall discern the working out of these three principles in all that he has written.


"He does not," as Professor Dowden has beautifully expressed it, "supply us with a doctrine, with an interpretation, with a revelation. What he brings

to us is this—to each one, courage, and energy, and strength, to dedicate himself and his work to that—whatever it may be—which life has revealed to him as best, and highest, and most real.” This, surely, is religion—and the man who does this, the truly religious teacher.

WOMAN IN SHAKESPEARE

“THE female sex, in which antiquity saw nothing but inferiority, which Plato considered intended to do the same things as the male, only not so well, was understood for the first time by Christ. His treatment brought out its characteristics, its superiorities, its peculiar power of gratitude and self-devotion” (*Ecce Homo*, ch. xx.). So wrote the late Professor Seeley in one of the most memorable passages in his luminous survey of the life and teaching of the Founder of Christendom.

Quite apart from its theological significance—with which, of course, I have here no concern—this fact may justly be regarded as one of the most remarkable in human history. I have set it down here, in the very forefront of this paper, because I wish to place beside it another, which is, to the student of letters, scarcely less remarkable, viz. that in his estimation and appreciation of the woman-nature, Shakespeare occupies a similar position in the *literature* of the world to that which the Greater Teacher occupies in the history of its *life*. He was, indeed—as I shall



attempt to show—the literary creator of the fulness and all-embracing beauty of womanhood. Not until he wrote had been opened out to the gaze of men the wondrous possibilities of the female heart ; not until he painted those unrivalled portraits had it been revealed to the world how powerful a factor in the sweetening and sanctifying of life woman might be.

So far as I am aware, the first writer to emphasise, with any show of demonstration, this significant fact, was De Quincey, who set it forth in the pages of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* more than half a century ago.

“ The possible beauty of the female character,” he says, in the ‘ admirable and ingenious ’ memoir of the poet which he wrote for the seventh edition of that monumental work, “ had not been seen as in a dream before Shakespeare called into perfect life the radiant shapes of Desdemona, of Imogen, of Hermione, of Perdita, of Ophelia, of Miranda, and many others.”

And later :

“ In the great world, therefore, of woman, as the interpreter of the shifting phases and the lunar varieties of that mighty changeable planet, that lovely satellite, of man, Shakespeare stands, not the first only, not the original only, but is yet the sole authentic oracle of truth.”

In the light, then, of this bold and sweeping statement, let us briefly consider the position which woman



assigned in literature before the great dramatist gave to the world and the life.

On the threshold of our inquiry, our thoughts turn naturally to the great tragic writers of ancient Greece—to *Aeschylus*, *Sophocles*, and *Euripides*.

Now, it is obvious, even to the casual reader, that between the women of the Greek drama and those of Shakespeare there exists a striking and essential difference. We can, perhaps, best appreciate this difference when we remember what the purposes and ideals of Attic tragedy and of the Shakespearean drama respectively were. I need scarcely remind you that the underlying purpose of the former was not the representation of human character as such, but rather the delineation of human life lived under the influence of great uncontrollable forces working by mysterious agencies to still more mysterious ends—that, in a word, its chief concern was to depict, by powerful and moving situations, the wondrous operations of an inexorable fate. Everything, therefore, was made to subserve this paramount end, and hence the development of character along a natural and self-directed course was practically impossible. Majestic utterance in verse of the noblest and loftiest quality; the expression of exalted and inspiring thought; the presentation of great deeds, and the exhibition of heroic sacrifice;—these we have, it is true. But the figures which meet us in these grand and stately dramas are of men and women, not acting, primarily, under the impulse of their own distinctive wills, but moved hither and

thither by the irresistible forces of human destiny. How far otherwise it is with the dramatic creatures of Shakespeare is manifest, I say, to the most superficial reader ; instead of being, more or less, the puppets of Fate, they are its makers and its lords :

“ 'Tis in themselves that they are thus or thus.”

Twenty centuries lie between these two ideals—between the high-tide of Classic Tragedy and the perfect flowering of the Romantic Drama in Shakespeare—and the recording of the many vicissitudes through which the drama passed before it attained this remarkable consummation of artistic representation, must be regarded as one of the most valuable results of literary study and research.

The contrast between the women of the Attic stage and those of Shakespeare has been vividly drawn by De Quincey in the essay to which I have already referred. Speaking of the former, he says :

“ These are fine marble groups, but they are not the warm breathing realities of Shakespeare ; there is ‘ no speculation ’ in their cold marble eyes ; the breath of life is not in their nostrils ; the fine pulses of womanly sensibilities are not throbbing in their bosoms. And,” he continues, “ besides this immeasurable difference between the cold, moony reflexes, as exhibited by the power of Grecian wit, and the true, sunny life of Shakespeare, it must be observed that the Antigones, etc., of the antique put forward but one single trait of character, like the aloe with its single blossom : this

solitary feature is presented it is as an abstraction and as an isolated quality : whereas in Shakespeare all is presented in the concrete : that is to say, not brought forward in relief as by some effort of an anatomical artist, but embodied and embedded, so to speak, as by the force of a creative nature, in the complex system of a human life : a life in which all the elements move and play simultaneously, and with something more than mere simultaneity or co-existence, acting and reacting each upon the other—nay, even acting by each other and through each other. In Shakespeare's characters is felt for ever a real *organic* life, where each is for the whole, and in the whole, and where the whole is for each and in each. They only are real incarnations."

It may be that the Greek women receive rather less than their due in this characteristic passage ; but, at all events, in its last few words is admirably stated the primary and particular excellence of Shakespeare's portraiture of woman,—the presentation, *i.e.*, of a great and wonderful organic force, manifesting itself in many and varied ways, but always exhibiting the woman as a being of flesh and blood, a dear familiar soul, a creature of the world's work-a-day life. Ideal forms meet our gaze as we make our way through the stirring scenes of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*—Andromache, Penelope, Nausicaa ; regal figures stand out in bold relief from the pages of Attic tragedy—Antigone, Clytemnestra, Iphigenia, Alcestis ; but not until we open our own

And then it is that we feel the satisfying might of Shakespeare's power. His sweetness never cloy, his men and women—nay, even his fairies and their airy fellows—never weary us ; for in all we find the elements of the actual and the ideal so skilfully blended that they, the creatures of his fancy, are one with us as we with them. No ; Spenser's Una, although "an idealised portrait of female excellence and virgin purity," is "too shadowy and unreal for a dramatic reality." As we walk with her through the courtly poet's pages, we feel that she is scarcely of us and of this earth of ours.

The women of the *Arcadia*, on the other hand—despite the artificialities and conceits that abound in Sidney's famous pastoral—are, as Coleridge remarked one day to Payne Collier, "flesh and blood, with their very defects and qualifications giving evidence of their humanity" ; and, indeed, the great critic singles out Shakespeare and his illustrious contemporary as "the only writers of that age who pitched their ideas of female perfection according to the best researches of philosophy."

Of Shakespeare's immediate predecessors in the drama I need only say that, in preparing the way for him, they painted many admirable pictures of women of varying types. But it was left for the "soveran poet" to set the crown of fulness upon the brow of woman as she is presented to us in the literature of the world.

In what light, then, did Shakespeare regard woman,



and in what respect does his vision of her differ from those of his foregoers in the art of letters ?

In the first place, he saw her in her true relation to the larger life of the world, and so represented in her the most powerful influence which plays upon the heart of man—revealing in her all that is most ennobling, all that is most fatal, to his soul. But, because he saw that always and everywhere goodness is greater and mightier than evil, that love is stronger than hate, that gentleness is more persuasive than fear, that kindness is “nobler ever than revenge,” he saw in woman the most potent and essential of those human agencies which make for the softening and the sanctifying of the rough heart of the world. Hers was a sweetening and a humanising touch. And it was, pre-eminently, in this divine exaltation of her human-heartedness that Shakespeare excelled all who preceded him in the long poetic line. He looked upon her, as Mrs. Jameson beautifully puts it, “with the spirit of humanity, wisdom, and deep love,” and it is in the atmosphere which breathes about those heavenly attributes that she moves through his page. Others had sounded the deep thunder-tones with which her soul when strongly moved can swell ; others had used certain of its “epic and lyric stops” ; but none before had given such full, clear, and passionate utterance to those subtler strains without which the music was not, and could not be, complete.

He delighted in her, with the delight of one who sees what an instrument she, as very woman, may become

in the hands of one who knows its use and feels it native to his touch.

In his vision, then—to adapt to our discussion Matthew Arnold's famous line—he “saw (her) steadily and saw (her) whole”; saw, moreover, that she “is not undeveloped man,” but wondrously “diverse.” And so it is that his pictures of her are so perennially delightful, so instinct with “warm life.” For they show us woman endowed with “the appropriate beauty of female nature. . . . Woman running through the vast gamut of womanly loveliness. . . . Woman the sister and co-equal of man.” Nay, they would seem to show her to us as, in the greatest things, his superior; for he who in his “boundless human view” took in life's widest range, who sent the plummet of his soul to its furthest deeps, has given to us no man who, by his grandeur and loftiness of soul, can fit our heart's ideal as they, the loveliest of his women.

Again, Shakespeare's portrayal of woman is perhaps the most convincing evidence he has given us of his greatness as a master of purely creative art. For it is in this delightful realm that inspiration—that strange, subtle, inexplicable “something” which differentiates the poet from the poetaster, the artist from the artisan, the man of genius in any branch from the “common cry” of mortals—finds its accepted, its most natural home. And it would seem that in this matter of the characterisation of woman the poet's rarest gift found freest play, for one

cannot escape the thought that in the pictures of the men he has left us there is much greater evidence of careful and studied delineation than in those wherein he has portrayed his women. The latter, indeed, bring with them the freshness of the dawn : they seem to leap from the poet's brain with the dew of his thought bright-glistening upon them. But his *men* bear marks of the mental and moral conflict through which he must have passed before those wondrous creatures of his imagination were ready for the eye and heart of the world.

This, I fancy, is much what Professor Dowden means when he says : " Shakespeare creates his women by a single strong and exquisite inspiration ; but he studies his men." *

So, it would seem, as the same writer finely says, that " the chief problems of life seemed to lurk for Shakespeare in the souls and lives of men, and therefore he was more profoundly interested in the natures of men than in those of women. His great tragedies are not Cordelia, Desdemona, Ophelia, Volumnia ; but Lear, Othello, Hamlet, Coriolanus. . . . His witty women are not a complex of all various qualities like Falstaff ; his wicked women are simply wicked like Goneril and Regan, not an inscrutable mystery of iniquity like Iago ; his women of intellect are bright, are effective with ideas which they use as a means of action or of enjoyment, but among them there is not a female Hamlet." True ; but, as the great com-

* *Shakespeare : His Mind and Art.*

soever they appear, and shape the course of so many other lives than their own.

To me—as indeed it must, I suppose, be with all—their chief charm—while at the same time, coupled with their ideal character, it constitutes their highest claim to our regard—lies, as I have already remarked, in their intense *humanness*; they are, even the most ideal of them, women in every sense of the word; there is nothing shadowy or unreal about them. For Shakespeare's ideal woman is

“ Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,
No angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
In angel instincts, breathing Paradise,”


and truly—throwing Tennyson's tender lines into the present sense—may we say of her that she

“ looks all native to her place, and yet
On tiptoe seems to touch upon a sphere
Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce
Sway to her from their orbits as they move,
And girdle her with music.”

THE SUPERNATURAL ELEMENT IN SHAKESPEARE

I

By the “supernatural” in Shakespeare, I mean that element in his representations of human character and human history which is concerned with causes



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and forces which, while they find their sphere of action and influence in the physical world as we at present know it—the world of men and things—have their origin outside and beyond it.

In one of his oftenest quoted and most striking passages, Shakespeare has defined the special faculty and characteristic of the poet in terms that set us at once on the track that we are to pursue in our present inquiry. And it is not a little significant that the passage occurs in a play that will occupy not a little of our attention—the *Midsummer Night's Dream* :


“ The lunatic, the lover and the poet
Are of imagination all compact.

The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to
heaven ;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.”

Here we have the poet characterised in the twofold aspect of *singer* and *seer*. All things in heaven and earth and between them come within his far-searching ken : he is the lord of imagination, supreme in fancy as in the faculty of *seeing*, and as his “ seething brain ” conjures up the forms that Fancy feigns, to those airy shapes, which to the ordinary mind are things

of nothingness, he gives "a local habitation and a name." Such is the seer, and such is the master-poet of the world. He is not only the maker of a verbal music matchless in its cadence and in its power over the souls of men—the singer of the lordliest songs that ever came from a poet's heart ; he is also the seer of the clearest and profoundest vision that has yet been woven into verse, and the discerner of the deepest things that the spirit of poetry has ever moulded into speech.

Now, all religions and all mythologies are based upon the consciousness in the human mind of some force or forces which are felt to lie behind the universe of matter, and of which that universe itself is the manifestation ; and consequently, on the feeling that between those forces and the physical universe there exists a more or less intimate connection. My object in this paper is to endeavour to illustrate briefly Shakespeare's recognition of the close relation in which man stands to the spiritual forces at work around him, and to indicate, or rather to suggest—for these brief notes are put together merely by way of suggestion—some of the various means which our poet has employed for its dramatic representation. Its *dramatic* representation, I say, for we must remember that paramount as a poet though he was, Shakespeare was essentially a dramatist, a playwright. That is to say, he wrote plays that were intended to be presented on the stage ; not plays that were to remain merely as dramatic poems, the delight of the student and the scholar, but




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plays that were designed primarily for public representation. (That he did both—that he made great poems out of these wonderful plays—is but one of the many marks of his commanding genius.) And thus it is that, as Professor Dowden has well said, though “Shakespeare’s plays can be studied with admirable results in the closet, they live their highest, fullest, and most exquisite life upon the stage.”

In him we have then the most conspicuous example of the perfect blending of the playwright and the poet ; in his dramas we have the highest poetry wedded to the most skilful and consummate stage-craft : a capacity, for instance, for making his creations live their fullest life on the stage—provided of course that they are in the hands of capable exponents—and for enabling the *motif* of the drama and the play and counterplay of character to make there their most powerful appeal.

Yet, though Shakespeare was so essentially a playwright, he was pre-eminently the poet and the seer. And so, in examining his treatment of the supernatural and the particular use to which he put it in his delineation of character and his presentation of human life, we shall see that there is nothing that is vulgar, conventional, or rigidly commonplace.

We know what an inveterate borrower he was of the ground-work of his plays ; how he laid legend and mediæval story, classic antiquity and old-time romance, under contribution for plot and incident. And in this connection I am reminded of the significant remark



of Dr. R. G. Moulton's, that Shakespeare is never greater than the age in which he writes. At first sight or hearing this comes to us as a somewhat startling statement, so accustomed have we become to think of Shakespeare, in the generous words of Ben Jonson, as "the poet not of an age, but for all time." But if we read carefully and reflect upon all that he has given to us, we shall see that, in a very real sense, Dr. Moulton's words are true. And their truth is seen particularly in the way in which the poet adapts himself to the beliefs, the superstitions, the tendencies of the time in which he lived and wrote.

Like the shrewd playwright that he was, he seized upon the great mass of floating folk-lore and popular belief, the stage conventions and dramatic devices of his day, and with wondrously delicate touch, and with a genius that remains one of the greatest marvels as it is the chief of the delights of our literature, wove such of it as suited the purpose of the moment into those arresting studies of life and character which constitute the richest storehouse of wit, wisdom, pathos, and beauty that any language has reserved for the delectation of mankind. For like the true artist, again, he asked himself how such fancies and beliefs, such conventions and devices, might serve his artistic purpose, and perceiving the potency, no less than the delightsomeness, which lay behind them, he employed them with consummate art in his delineation of the infinite variety of the human heart.

Mere creatures of fancy though these beings are



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which he brings upon the stage from time to time ; relics of an obsolete mythology though many of the conventions which he employs may be ; the poet of a transcendent vision sees in them the representations of great spiritual truths, and as such they find their place of power and fitness in his dramatic scheme, aiding in the unfolding of the story and the delineation of character in a way that is wondrously striking and convincing.

The poet has a truth to convey, a motive to exhibit, a relation to emphasise, the workings of a mind to indicate or display, an atmosphere to suggest. How can this most effectively be done ? By what means can he most easily and at the same time most convincingly arrest the attention of the spectator and bring home to his mind that which he wishes to convey ? This is the poet's supreme consideration.

Here, in a more or less crude form, is a large body of legend and folk-belief hallowed to the popular mind by long-standing tradition ; here are conventions and devices appealing through repeated usage to the deep-rooted sentiment of an age rich in an inheritance of the fairy-lore and fancy of an earlier time. These, then, are the poet's to use as best he may. Seizing upon them with the precision of one who sees what they may become in the hands of one who knows how to use them, he fits them for his purposes, and through them teaches lessons of truth and beauty not only to the men and women of his own day, but, as time has proved, to countless thousands then unborn.


II

Let us, then, consider the supernatural element which is the subject of our discussion in the threefold aspect in which it presents itself to us in the pages of Shakespeare. This threefold aspect is represented by the *Ghosts*, the *Witches*, and the *Fairies*.

THE GHOST IN SHAKESPEARE

What was the poet's own belief in the matter of ghosts and similar apparitions we have, of course, no means of discovering. But this we do know: that they certainly stand first among the "supernatural" aids employed by him, by reason of the frequent use which he makes of them. They constitute, that is to say, the dominant factor in his supernatural machinery. So large a part, indeed, do they play in his dramas, that the poet has by certain irreverent critics—by Voltaire and others—been sneered at for his propensity for such stage artifices as these. On the French stage, one can well imagine, such a figure as that of the Ghost in *Hamlet*, for example, would not be tolerated: its introduction would be treated as a piece of mere vulgar pantomime.

But Shakespeare was writing for the public of Elizabethan England; for the Teutonic, not the Latin, mind. And in that public and that mind, we must remember, the "ghost" element was a powerful mainspring of interest.



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My purpose is firstly to emphasise the large part played by the Ghost in the Shakespearean drama ; and secondly, to show that it is with Shakespeare, whatever it may have been with his contemporaries, no mere stage convention ; that he made this supernatural agency serve a deeper purpose than that of supplying the demand of his Elizabethan audience for this traditional element of stage-craft.

An attempt has been made to show, by what we may call the chronological method of Shakespearean study, that as the poet progressed in his art, his knowledge of occult phenomena grew.

The bogies of *Richard III.* (which on internal evidence is commonly assigned to 1593 or 1594) have been compared with the Ghost of *Cæsar* (conjectural date 1600-1), and this latter with the Ghost in *Hamlet*, which, as a finished play, belongs to the period between 1601 and 1603. The Ghosts of *Richard III.* are certainly of a lower order than the majestic spirit which dominates the tragedy of Denmark's Prince, and which may be taken as Shakespeare's typical Ghost. Now, the Ghost in *Hamlet* differs essentially from all the other apparitions of a like kind to be found in the poet's dramas by the fact of its undoubtedly objective character. In the case of the Ghost of Cæsar, the apparition of Banquo at the feast, the "air-drawn dagger" of the conscience-stricken king in the same play, as well as of the "bogies" of Gloster already mentioned, the explanation may legitimately go on the lines of pure subjectivity. But with the spectre of *Hamlet*, it

is different ; for that imperious apparition is seen not by Hamlet alone, but by three others also, and by these others first.

I confess, however, that to me the distinction does not count for very much. I leave the spiritualists and the sceptics to wrangle at their pleasure, and content myself with the reflection that, apart from the exigences of dramatic representation, here was Shakespeare's mode of revealing a great spiritual truth—the intimate connection that exists between man and the vast realm of the Unknown.

I would have you notice here that the introduction of the Ghost in *Hamlet* is no mere incident, as in *Richard III.* and *Julius Cæsar*. It is here the dominating figure. And as if to declare his intention from the outset : as if, moreover, to indicate the awesomeness of all that is to follow, the dramatist brings us at once into the presence of that ghostly visitant from the under-world. In the opening scenes it comes with " martial stalk " before the " oppressed and fear-surprised eyes " of the Danish sentinels.

Shakespeare, it seems, would tell us, in the words of his Prince, that

" There are more things in heaven and earth . . .
Than are dreamt of in our philosophy."

But it is in another word of Hamlet's that I seem to see the more particular lesson that Shakespeare intends to teach through his spectral haunter

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of the battlements of Elsinore : in the Prince's cry,

“ Foul deeds will rise
Though all the world o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.”

And may not these words have some bearing on the question of the Ghost's *objectivity* to which I have already referred? May they not help to explain the fact of its visibility to others than the one to whom it had primarily come? However, to deal at all adequately with the nature and purpose of the Ghost element in *Hamlet*, one would need to do nothing less than make an analysis of the character of Hamlet himself, which is, of course, beside my purpose here. I therefore leave this first branch of my subject to pass to the second class of Shakespeare's supernatural beings.

THE WITCHES

The mention of Witches takes us at once to the tragedy of *Macbeth*, the only play of Shakespeare's in which this particular form of the supernatural element appears. The treatment of the Witch element in this play affords an excellent illustration of the sense in which the poet is infinitely greater than his age; of the depth and far-sightedness of his vision; and of his remarkable faculty for turning the conventions of his day and the elements of the dramatist's stock-in-trade to the higher purposes of his art.

Compare the treatment by Shakespeare of the Witch with that of a contemporary dramatist who has, in one of his best-known plays, made use of this singular *dramatis persona*; viz. Thomas Middleton. No one can read that writer's *The Witch* without feeling how immeasurably the representatives of these creatures of terror and mystery, as seen in Middleton's play, fall below the nameless, sexless, inscrutable, fate-moving beings whom Shakespeare brings before us in his thrilling tragedy. I cannot, however, better clinch the comparison than in Charles Lamb's well-known words:

"Shakespeare's witches are distinguished from the witches of Middleton by essential differences. These are creatures to whom man or woman, plotting some dire mischief, might resort for occasional consultation. Those originate deeds of blood, and begin bad impulses to men. From the moment that their eyes first meet with Macbeth's, he is spell-bound. That meeting sways his destiny. He can never break the fascination. These witches can hurt the body, those have power over the soul. Hecate, in Middleton, has a son, a low buffoon: the hags of Shakespeare have neither child of their own, nor seem to be descended from any parent. They are foul anomalies, of whom we know not whence they are sprung, nor whether they have beginning or ending. As they are without human passions, so they seem to be without human relations. They come with thunder and lightning, and vanish to airy music. This is all we know of them. Except



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Hecate, they have no *names* ; which heightens their mysteriousness. The names, and some of the properties, which the other author has given to his hags, excite smiles. The Weird Sisters are serious things. Their presence cannot co-exist with mirth. But, in a lesser degree, the witches of Middleton are fine creations. Their power too is, in some measure, over the mind. They raise jars, jealousies, strifes, 'like a thick scurf' over life."

In these last few words, quoted by Lamb from Middleton's play, we have a sufficiently clear indication of the Witches' power and diabolical function as they appeared to Shakespeare's contemporary. But the greater poet saw with more penetrating vision the purpose the Witches might be made to serve. He saw that they might be employed to represent not only such derangement of the world's harmony as is expressed in the words just cited, but to represent the whole body of evil influence which is continually playing around the spirit and the heart of man.

And thus he has presented us with a marvellous study of the relation, which is everywhere apparent, between the personal life of man and "the large impersonal life of the world."

THE FAIRIES

We come now to speak of the Fairies, which in popular mythology represent a syncretism of the Ghost and the Witch—"not wholly human like the

outcome of "Dan Cupid's" maddest and merriest pranks. To illustrate this the poet calls to his aid Titania and her fairy train, those frolicsome beings who play such havoc with the heart of man.

I have already referred, but very briefly, to the general character of the fairies as they appear in the pages of Shakespeare. It may be interesting to note further the special marks of these winsome children of the originator of literary fairyland, as he has given them to us. Mr. Chambers, the latest editor of Shakespeare's fairy comedy, enumerates their characteristics as follows :

- (a) They form a community under a king and queen.
- (b) They are exceedingly small.
- (c) They move with extreme swiftness.
- (d) They are elemental airy spirits ; their brawls incense the wind and moon and cause tempests (see *The Tempest*) ; they take a share in the life of nature ; live on fruit ; deck the cowslips with dewdrops ; war with noxious insects and reptiles ; overcast the sky with fog, etc.
- (e) They dance in orbs upon the green.
- (f) They sing hymns and carols to the moon.
- (g) They are invisible and apparently immortal.
- (h) They come forth at night.
- (i) They fall in love with mortals.
- (j) They steal babies and leave changelings.
- (k) They come to bless the bride-bed and make the increase thereof fortunate.

Students of folk-lore may note how what we may

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call the deeper side of their activity—their share in the life of nature and the sway they exercise over its benign and malign manifestations—is wholly ignored by later fairy literature. And this deeper side is, of course, that which I have been endeavouring to emphasise in this brief and rapid survey of the supernatural element in Shakespeare, and what constitutes much of the poet's greatness as a discerner of the profounder significance of that which to the less keenly observant and less richly imaginative mind is matter merely of mirth and lightsomeness.

From the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, the earlier drama of fairy enchantment, we turn, in conclusion, to the later, *The Tempest*; and here we come to the poet's ripest thought, and with it to the deepest philosophy of the supernatural which Shakespeare has to teach us. In the earlier play we saw Helena and Hermia, Lysander and Demetrius, wandering to and fro in a maze of error, misled by the mischievous frolics of Puck, that arch-plotter and chief jester of Fairyland. But here the poet would show us Man, not the sport of the elements and the spirits of earth and air, but their vanquisher and master. Prospero, in whom Shakespeare may be said to represent the dominant Intellect and Will of Man, has put them in subjection under him; in him the natural and the supernatural meet; for he "has entered into complete possession of himself." He has "reached not only the higher levels of moral attainment, he has also reached an altitude of thought from which he can survey the

whole human life and see how small and yet how great it is."

Such is the poet himself. Indeed, it has become one of the commonplaces of Shakespeare criticism to identify this portrait of the arch-enchanter—about to break his staff, sink his book deeper than ever plummet sounded, and dismiss his fairy spirits—with the poet retiring, at the close of his wonderfully fruitful period of literary activity, to a calm rest-time in peaceful Stratford. He closes the Book of his marvellous achievement, and, as he speaks the word of dismissal to his crowd of attendant spirits, he but sends them to dwell in our hearts, a lasting, an imperishable possession.

LITERATURE AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

IN venturing to deal with the subject of Literature in its relation to Social Progress, I feel constrained to ask you to believe that I am only too keenly conscious of the formidable character of the task I have undertaken. The difficulty of treating the matter before us with anything approaching adequacy in a short paper, I realise as fully and clearly as may be. Of the magnitude and the importance, to say nothing of the fascination, of the subject, we all, I imagine, have a very real and lively sense. But how to do even the scantest justice to it in view of that magnitude and importance is of course another matter. I will ask

you, therefore, to accept this little contribution of mine as an essay in the real sense of that term—a tentative effort, that is to say, in the direction of suggesting to you and to myself what might, given the necessary fulness of knowledge, time, and space, be made of a subject fraught with such abounding interest and attractiveness to the serious student, alike of literature and life.

The conjunction of those two words—"Literature" and "Life"—will serve at the outset to indicate the line of inquiry we are to follow. It is, however, only part of such a course of inquiry that I am going to ask you to traverse with me, for I wish to deal specifically with the relation between literature and that side of our common life which is concerned with the progress of the race—or, more particularly, of the community—to higher ideals of thought, conduct, and achievement. What has literature done for the uplifting of man as a social being; for the securing to the individual and to the nation of healthier conditions of life and activity? That, broadly speaking, is the question I propose for our consideration here. We cannot, as I have said, answer it by any means in full, but we can, I think, gather even from a brief discussion a few suggestions that may assist us towards a right estimation of the relationship which the title of my paper, with sufficient clearness, indicates.

There is surely no need for me to define my terms. We all know, I hope, what Literature means, and about the phrase "Social Progress" there is, I may safely

assume, as little ambiguity in your minds. It will be as well, however, for me to state here that I wish to confine the term "Literature" more or less to those expressions of the human mind in literary form which posterity has stamped with the seal of a distinction that has marked them as belonging to the permanent possessions of mankind. Within the last six or seven decades there has grown up a vast body of writing, singularly various in its character, though marked by a general integrity of aim, which owes its origin to that awakened passion for social advancement which we associate more particularly with the latter half or three-quarters of the nineteenth century. To-day, a considerable amount of what we usually speak of as our current literature is distinctly social in its birth and in its professed or implied aims. Its relation to life, and particularly to life on its more strenuous side, is unmistakable. With much of this, I have here no immediate concern. The point I wish merely to note in passing is that, under the increasing stress and strain of modern life, literature is tending more and more to become the handmaid of a progressive sociology. Even poetry—the poetry, I mean, that is really characteristic of the period—is seen to be suffused with a fiercer flow of the humanitarian passion, to reflect the ardour of a reforming zeal, or to voice the hopes and fears which fill the national mind. For the poet who feels that he has a "message," to whom his art is something more than a mere dallying with the muse of song, a mere sporting with the Amaryllis of honeyed

words and metrical delights, cannot escape the haunting voices of the time, cannot shut his eyes to popular needs or close his ears to crying shames. He cannot, by the very nature of his calling, disengage himself from the prevailing spirit of his age. He may, indeed, feel, like William Morris, that he is but "the idle singer of an empty day." But if he has the deeper passions that invade the soul of the true "maker" of verbal harmonies, he must give himself to the effort to fill that day with loftier ideals, and to inform it with a nobler and diviner spirit. And so we get the tones that breathe through a *Locksley Hall*, *The Song of the Shirt*, *The Cry of the Children*, and that strong, strenuous note which sounds through so much of the humanitarian poetry of the nineteenth century.

And let me say here that the influence of the poet—even in the direction of social progress, as we commonly understand that term—cannot be confined to that part of his work which is written expressly in the interests, so to speak, of a purer and truer and more equitable social life.

The true poet is no mere doctrinaire. He has no set or elaborate theories of government to offer us. He does not give us rules and regulations for the framing of laws or the directing of great public works. But if his song be pure and high, if his "message" be sane and strong, if his vision be penetrating and clear, the outcome of his teaching must be the cleansing and uplifting and bettering of men. "The highest literature," as the late Professor Henry Morley finely said,

But they are interesting as pointing to what we may call the high-water mark of that particular age's level of intellectual and spiritual discernment; or—to change the figure—we may regard them as milestones on the march of thought towards the conception of a world as yet unrealised, but which is, one day, we trust, to be.

It would be a considerable matter to give even a summary account of those “ideal states” which the greater literature of the world has pictured from age to age. Of some of them only the barest mention can be made. First among them, as I have said—and not only chronologically, but also by reason of its range and depth of thought and the grandeur and vividness of its conception—stands the *Republic* of Plato. Put into the fewest possible words, the idea underlying this greatest and completest of Plato's dialogues is that of an ideal state in which the individual citizen, entirely subordinated to the community—here you have the root principle of modern socialism—shall grow up to exhibit the order, harmony, courage, and self-restraint characteristic of the state as a whole, the life of which is to be simple, rigidly self-contained, and ordered on the lines of strictest justice. That word “justice” is, indeed, the basis and *raison d'être* of the whole discussion; it is the rock, so to speak, on which the ideal state is built; for an inquiry having been started among the various speakers who take part in this remarkable dialogue, respecting the nature of justice, Socrates—who is,



of course, the chief speaker—suggests at length that it will be best discovered from its operation in a perfect state or commonwealth, and then, when so discovered, it might be recognised by analogy in the individual.

“ We speak (said Socrates) of justice as residing in an individual mind, and as residing also in an entire city, do we not ? Certainly we do, he (*i.e.* Adeimantus) said. Well, a city is larger than one man. It is.

“ Perhaps, then, justice may exist in larger proportions in the greater subject, and thus be easier to discover : so, if you please, let us first investigate its character in cities ; afterwards let us apply the same inquiry to the individual, looking for the counterpart of the greater as it exists in the form of the less.”

From this point the various characteristics of the life of the perfect state are built up. We may, however, note, as indicative of the general disposition of affairs, the interesting division which Socrates makes of the men and women of the ideal commonwealth. They are classed as Guardians, Auxiliaries, and Producers, and are respectively the rulers or magistrates, the defenders, and the providers. Each class has its distinguishing virtue : the guardians, wisdom ; the auxiliaries, courage ; and the producers, temperance. The fourth of the great cardinal virtues of which the life of the true state is made up is justice. (But the inquiry was, after all, philosophical rather than practical, for Plato was pre-eminently the philosopher, and the distinctive note of the dialogue is struck—

a more modern product of the genius of man unfolding itself in the light of the vision of a world unborn, but yet to be. Of what lies between the Greek expression of this ideal and the noblest form it has taken in the literature of our own land—of the “Romanising” of the original thought by Cicero, and its adaptation to more purely spiritual purposes by St. Augustine in his monumental work, *De Civitate Dei*, with its striking contrast between the two cities—the city of God and the city of the world—in their origin, their development, and their final destiny—of all this, I say, we cannot now speak; though shortly we shall turn our thoughts again to an earlier period of our national history than that in which our interest at the present moment lies.

Sir Thomas More (1478—1535) is remembered, and will continue to be remembered for many things—for his fine, ripe scholarship, for the grace and vigour of his writing, for the beauty and tenderness of the home-life which he nurtured, for his sincerity, his courage, his deep, unflinching faith. But most of all, perhaps, he will be remembered (so one of his later biographers, Mr. W. H. Hutton, has said) for his passionate ideal of social progress—“So long as men suffer and thinkers search for remedies for human misery and human sin, the author of the *Utopia* is immortal.”

Nay, more; when these things no longer exist—if, indeed, the world is ever to know them merely as links in the long chain of apprenticeship and development,



and not as perpetually active agencies—the men of that millennial time will look back on Sir Thomas More's sublime vision as one of the brightest heraldings of the world's social and spiritual enfranchisement. From the Greek speculation of the fourth century before Christ to the Humanism of the sixteenth after His coming—a period, that is, of nearly two thousand years—seems a far cry. And yet here we have a social ideal that, as Professor Jowett says in his Introduction to the *Republic*, “is penetrated with the spirit of Plato.” The direct connection, indeed—apart even from the similarity in general conception—may be traced in more than one explicit reference to Plato and his book. For Raphael Hythloday—the relater of the travel-narrative which embodies the description of the island of Utopia and its people and their government—was, we read, “eminently learned in the Greek tongue”; and More, in the course of the preliminary conversation, reminds him of the opinion of “your friend Plato,” who “thinks that nations will be happy, when either philosophers become kings, or kings become philosophers.”

Plato, as I have already reminded you, was the philosopher pure and simple: he had neither the adaptable mind nor the practical insight necessary to the man of affairs. More, on the other hand, possessed a mind stored with practical statesmanship; indeed, he had had actual experience of it. Consequently his ideal commonwealth makes a more convincing appeal to the modern temper, and is, indeed, as fresh to-day

and government and those of the ideal commonwealth he has been depicting for us.

"So must I needs confess and grant that many things be in the Utopian public weal which in our cities I may rather wish for than hope after."

There is, I say, the note of satire here. Yet More's social passion was too intense, and his spirit too rich in gentle charities and pure zeal, to allow the satiric note to drown the voice of a milder and more earnest pleading. And there is a real sigh, as well as a devout yearning, in those few closing words.

The next notable attempt at the outlining of an ideal commonwealth in English literature is associated with the great name of Francis Bacon, whose *New Atlantis* was published in 1629, *i.e.* three years after its illustrious author's death. Bacon was, as you know, the father of Modern Science, and it is Science that, in his ideal land, is shown to be the great civiliser and bond between man and man.

In that wonderful scheme of the *Great Instauration* which he projected as "a total reconstruction of sciences, arts, and all human knowledge, raised upon the proper foundations," the New Philosophy was to be "the apocalypse or true vision of the footsteps of the Creator imprinted on His creatures." The practical results which the author of this stupendous design of a perfected science anticipated from the "legitimate, chaste, and severe course of inquiry" he had planned, are to be found in the unfinished book known as the *New Atlantis*.

Contemporaneous with Bacon's vision is that of another ardent seeker after the deeper truths of science—the Italian patriot and philosopher, Thomas Campanella. So great, indeed, was his zeal for the cause he had espoused, that he chose rather to suffer the tortures of the Inquisition than follow the path of an “easy orthodoxy.” Twenty-seven of his seventy-one years he spent in prison—on a charge of joining in the conspiracy to expel the Spaniards from Naples—and during this time he wrote, among many other things, the “poetical dialogue,” descriptive of “The City of the Sun.”

Here, again, Plato appears as the inspirer, and here, again, the ideal of government is that which seeks not the advancement of individual interest, but the common weal. “The race,” says the sea-captain who—as was the case, you remember, in the *Utopia*—is relating the story of the voyage during which he chanced upon this remarkable city—“The race is managed for the good of the commonwealth, and not of private individuals.” How this is accomplished we need not stay now to inquire. But there is one passage which I cannot forbear to quote, not for its value as a contribution to our present discussion, but as a quaint commentary upon certain feminine fashions and foibles of our own day.

Our friend the sea-captain is speaking of Plato's views with regard to sexual relationships, and he says, referring to a certain device which Plato proposes for the securing of the right ordering of these relationships:

writers as Kingsley, Carlyle, and Ruskin—work which lies so near to our own day, and which has done, perhaps, more than that of any other of the nineteenth-century writers for the cause of social progress.

Who, indeed, could forget the splendid service which Charles Kingsley and his fellow Christian Socialists rendered to that cause? or who could measure the extent of the influence which the author of *Past and Present* and *Latter-Day Pamphlets* has had upon the fashioning of a purer and loftier social ideal? Who, again, could over-estimate the debt which the England of to-day owes to the passionate enthusiasm and self-sacrificing labours of John Ruskin?

The work of these writers and of their contemporaries and fellow-labourers in the cause of social progress, so far as the zeal for it has been reflected in literature, is too well-known to need emphasising here.

So far, then, our inquiry has kept us within the domains of the prose literature of our land. I wish, however, to say something of the service which English *Poetry* has rendered to the cause of social emancipation and progress. For the first distinct utterance of the social passion in the heart of the poets, we must go back nearly five and a half centuries—to the days immediately preceding those which dear old Chaucer made so melodious with his imperishable song. Those were dark days for the English peasantry. The Black Death—"the most terrible

plague which the world ever witnessed"—had swept through the land, carrying away with it, in its repeated visitations, more than one half of the three or four millions who then formed the population of England.* The result was that "the whole organisation of labour was thrown out of gear." "For a time cultivation became impossible." "The sheep and cattle," says one who was living at the time, "strayed through the fields and corn, and there was none left to drive them." And now for the first time there was revealed—amid all the awful contrasts between rich and poor—that strife between Capital and Labour which has continued, with more or less vehemence, down to our own day.


The enforcement of the statute which attempted to fix the amount of labourers' wages and forbade the giving of alms to "sturdy beggars" (passed in 1351), failed to stem the tide of revolt and distress, and a few years later the cry of the oppressed and suffering poor found terrible utterance in the burning words of a poor Kentish priest—John Ball by name—who, "in defiance of interdict and imprisonment," preached to the ready ears of the stout yeomen who gathered round him in the churchyards of that southern shire, the doctrine of natural equality and the rights of man.

Surely the most uncompromising of modern Socialists never spoke more scathing words than these: "Good people, things will never go well in England so long

* *Vide J. R. Green's History of the English People.*

One would like to dwell, again, upon some of those poems which, like this wonderful *Vision*, have been written expressly in the interests of social righteousness, as protests against the iniquities of social oppression and wrong—such, *e.g.*, as Tom Hood's *Song of the Shirt*, Mrs. Browning's *Cry of the Children* and *Bertha in the Lane*; the slave poems of Longfellow, Whittier, and Lowell; the verses of Ebenezer Elliott, "The Corn Law Rhymers"; Kingsley's *The Bad Squire*, and many another more or less melodious witness on behalf of the principles of Justice, Equity and Truth.

We might consider, too, the part played by the Novel in this awakening and emancipating process—more especially, of course, by what is known as "the novel with a purpose," like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Kingsley's *Alton Locke*, George Eliot's *Felix Holt*, Dickens's *Bleak House*, and others of that notable line, Mrs. Humphry Ward's *Marcella*, Sir Walter Besant's *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*—to name but a few out of an almost countless host. This aspect of the question in itself, indeed, might be dealt with at a length we have allowed for the whole. But surely enough has been said to indicate the tremendous service which literature has, throughout the fruitful ages of its making, rendered to that cause of which it has always, as I have endeavoured to show, been so gracious and willing a handmaid—the cause of Social Progress, Enlightenment, and Reform.



POEMS AND SONNETS

That same sweet face has nestled, next my heart,
And the dear memory of her who bore it
Has strengthened me 'gainst all that life could bring
Of wrong or ill since first I looked upon her.
My wife ? Ah, no—at least, not she—poor heart !
Who now, I guess, towards this warring East
Is smiling all her soul, as watching still
That longed return which she will never see—
And yet my wife, my wife in truest truth,
Bride of my soul to all Eternity,
Whose heart, in one thrice-sacred nuptial hour,
At Heaven's High Altar of Divinest Love,
My own took to itself, to keep for aye,
In holiest bridal—soul to fellow-soul.
You look amazed, and doubtless deem I speak
The wild, unmeaning words of one who raves
In frenzied moments of delirious pain.
Nay, nay, good friend, I speak but sober truth,
As you shall know if you will only lend
A patient ear to what I have to tell.

* * * *

No matter how we met, or when, or where ;
I am not likely to forget the hour,
The place, or the all-blessed chance that threw
Our paths together.—Chance ? 'Twas God's own hand
That guided me to her, as her to me.
We met—let that suffice, —we met and loved.

Love at first *sight* may be a fiction—well ;
But not love at first *sound*. Her voice ! Ah, me !



I heard that ere I looked upon her face,
And at the sound of it, my heart awoke
From out the lethargy of many a year,
And bounded forth to meet that heart of hers
That long had waited for its fellow,—yea,
Since first it taught itself what 'twas to yearn
For the true fellowship of mutual souls.
What need to tell the whole sad story o'er ?
The bitter-sweet of brief companionship,
With all its rapture, all its thrills and tears,
We knew at last in all its bitterness ;
For tho' the months passed sweetly as a dream,
The morning chased the dazzling dream away ;—
We woke to tread our severed paths alone.
For I was bound, by more than plighted word,
To one—poor heart !—who only lived for me,
Whose only thought was how to serve me best,
Her dearest joy to be but by my side.
And when I told *her* of the patient years
Thro' which that other, with unwav'ring faith,
Had rested in the hope that one bright day
Would bring the dawn of Consummated Love,
She bade me keep my troth.—“ For, love,” said she,
“ I feel that she most needs you,—as for me,
Your love shall make me strong to live and bear
The bitterness of parting and the pang
That feeling you away must ever bring.
And, dear, you know true love is sacrifice :
I give you back to her who needs you most ;
'Tis something to have loved you, and to know

That you have loved me, and must ever love.”
 (O brave, true heart ! What love was like to thine ?)

* * * * *

More of your cordial, friend, my spirit ebbs.

* * * * *

The few short years of study that remained
 Passed all too soon, and at their close I gave
 My life, with all its hopes and fears, to her
 Who thro' those patient years of faithful love
 Had hungered for that day so long delayed ;
 While *she*—whom, by the holy bridal-vow
 We both had sworn at that thrice-hallowed time
 Of which I spoke, my soul had made its bride,
 And who had taught my new-awakened heart
 The purest passion it had ever known—
 Passed sorrowing into the quiet life
 That ere she met me she had learnt to love,
 Of watching by the bedside of the sick.
 One troubled time, one cruel, bitter time,
 The call rang thro' the land for tender hands
 To nurse the wounds and soothe the dying hours
 Of brave men bleeding for a holy cause.
 Among the great, true hearts that heard the call,
 And, with a holy, self-forgetful zeal,
 Gave instant answer, was my saintly love,
 My sweet Melissa—so was she called, good friend.
 And, O, with what ill thoughts do I recall
 The day that saw that fatal exodus !
 For she—how can I tell the rest ? . . . Revive
 My drooping spirit for the last few words—

She never saw her native land again.
While yet the war was at its height, she fell
Beneath the awful strain that heavy hours
Of tireless watching and unceasing care,
Of sleepless nights and days devoid of ease,
Put on her tender, young, and fragile frame.
She died. And ever since my soul has fed
Upon her memory, and taught itself
To tune its saddened music to the tone
It caught from hers and strove to make its own.

The story of the years from that dark day
Of unforgotten grief to that on which
I joined you as a brother-surgeon here,
I need not tell,—suffice it they were filled
With work and heavy thoughts, tho' lightened still
By tender tokens of a wife's true love.
Have I been happy in my work? Why ask?
It was the work *she* loved a man to do;
Tho' bringing tenderer hands than I could stretch
To quell the pain, or cool the fevered brow
Of some poor suff'rer from the battle's wrack. . . .
But now 'tis over, all is over now:
This random shot has done its fell work well. . . .
('Tis strange that one whose work is but to heal
Should be the mark for those who strive to kill.)
Ah, well! . . . Thank God, I leave no little ones
Unfathered by my death, no little hearts
To hunger vainly for a father's love
And miss his smile and want his pitying care,

Bear to my wife my dying benison—
She is, thank God, full well provided for.
But let her know, good friend, no word of this ;—
I would not have her gentle spirit vexed
With such proud pain as this would bring to her.
Guard but my secret well, 'tis all I ask. . . .
Yet one boon more, the last and greatest, this :
Be it your dearest care, good friend, to see
That this same locket shall not leave my breast,
But that, when Earth receives her own again,
It still shall rest where it has lain so long.
And so I go to join my spirit-love ;
She comes to meet me now, as her great heart
Met mine that day, and knew it for its own.
And our twin souls shall Godward wend, to tread
The way that no man knows, and so to melt
Into the light of Heav'n's Eternal Love.

COMMUNION

IN holy mood oft have I wandered forth
Where whisp'ring leaves lisped farewell to the day,
Or strayed, with none to mar my worshipping,
Barefooted by blue Ocean's foamy fringe,
Companioned but by many-mooded Thought
And some rare volume from my treasured store.
There, in the dewy calm of sunset-tide,
Or ere the day had reached her golden noon,
Fed I my soul upon the regal fare—
Some lordly song from out the 'parted time,



Or rime of singer of the passing day ;
Or sweet Religion's word of lowly Love ;
Or sober-thoughted, grave Philosophy ;—
But oftenest was my companion-friend
Some chapter of his Book Incomparable
Who—rarest-visioned of the Sons of Song—
Saw all that Life has been or e'er shall be,
And into matchless music wove his dream.
Yea, often thus,—
Beside the hedge-rows all ablanch with bloom,
Or on the long, lone, tide-swept shore, where breathed
The breezy murmur of the wavelet's song,—
Have I my soul fed at great Nature's feast,
And drunk the wine of high, ennobling Thought,
Learning the lore that they alone may learn
Whose hearts are opened at her low-voiced call.

What bliss 'twas then to feel—as who could not ?
At one with Nature and with Nature's God !

A DREAM OF EARLY EVE

(Written after watching a glorious sunset)

TO-NIGHT I watched the sun decline ;—and stood
As one entranced, whose soul by sweetest strains
From a rich instrument is drawn, and held
In rapturous servitude. I stood and gazed ;
And there, upon the horizon's threshold, gleamed
A living ball of liquid fire, and pressed


The sweetest Nature, with her lavish hand,
Outholds for world-environed man to drink ;—
But since it might not be, I turned away,
And thro' the Autumn gloaming's peaceful hush,
Retraced my steps towards the murm'rous town ;
And soon, as darkly stole the evening on,
The twilight shadows deepened into night.

"O VOICE OF THE SEA!"

O VOICE of the Sea—
Loved Voice of the Sea—
What is it your surges are saying to me,
As they wail in their sadness,
Or gambol in gladness ?—
Pray, tell me, O tender-loved Voice of the Sea !

O Voice of the Sea—
Winsome Voice of the Sea—
Like the siren's soft sigh sounds your singing to me :—
"Come, kiss me, caress me,
To your warm bosom press me"—
O Siren-like, soft, winsome Voice of the Sea !

O Voice of the Sea—
Wild Voice of the Sea—
Chanting ever the world-old proud song of the free :
"Free, free as the wind,
Which no fetters can bind,
Am I," roars the storm-born wild Voice of the Sea.



O Voice of the Sea—
Gladsome Voice of the Sea—
What laughter so loud as your boisterous glee ?
Then laugh on o'er your singing,
From your crested waves flinging
Delight and defiance, glad Voice of the Sea !

O Voice of the Sea—
Stern Voice of the Sea—
Foretelling the wrack of the tempest-to-be !
And, anon, the deep thunder,
From the clouds cleft asunder,
Makes a music to match the stern Voice of the Sea.

O Voice of the Sea—
Mournful Voice of the Sea—
There are tears in the tone that the winds bring to me;
While attuned to your singing,
My own heart's bells are ringing,
O sorrowing, sad, mournful Voice of the Sea !

O Voice of the Sea—
Loved Voice of the Sea—
Sad or glad, wild or winsome, still welcome to me !
Might I evermore hear you,
Yea, be evermore near you,
O strange, many-mooded, loved Voice of the Sea !

A MEMORY

OF all the thoughts of happy days
That gem my life's dull story,
None e'er shall tell of gladder days
Than those of sunny Sawrey.

'Twas there I heard so sweetly oft
The strains of "Annie Laurie";
And whensoever I hear them more,
They'll speak to me of Sawrey.

Ah! with what dear delight do I
Recall the purple glory
That hung its radiant mantle o'er
The heath'ry hills of Sawrey!

Now, by fair Esthwaite's liliated marge,
We wandered *con amore*;
Now, from our boat, the wafted song
Rose o'er the hills of Sawrey.

So in the autumn of my days,
And in their winter hoary,
My thoughts will ever proudly turn
To winsome little Sawrey.

And whensoever, my heart, you tell
That too-brief sojourn's story,
Say with what sighs we turned away
From sunny little Sawrey.



Yea, when dark hours shall bid me think
That life has lost its glory,
Come, mem'ry of those happy days,
And softly whisper—"Sawrey."

THE FIRST FALL OF THE LEAF

THE summer ling'reth yet,
Tho' garnered is the sheaf,
And all around I see
The first fall of the leaf.

Skies, as of balmiest June,
Smile from their cloudless blue,
While russet-brown and gold
Enwrap the Earth anew.

So may it be with me :
When Time's autumnal days
Shall strew their yellow leaves
Athwart Life's busy ways.

May yet the all-kindly Sun
Of Hope and blest Content
Smile thro' the grey Earth-mists,
And Peace with Joy be blent.

OCTOBER

OVER moorland and meadow and highway
Chilly sweeps the wind, wailingly, by ;
'Tis the knell of a summer that's faded,
Only born—like its blossoms—to die.

But bedecked with a soberer splendour,
Enrobed in a glory of gold,
Regal still—tho' her flow'r-crown is fallen—
Earth rekindles the worship of old.

A YEAR AGO

"FOR life," you said, "remember, we
Are friends for life;" I felt the glow
Of Love's warm hand-clasp thrill me thro'
A year ago.

Ah, yes, your hand held mine, your heart
Blent all its hopes with mine, as low
You murmured friendship's plighted troth,
A year ago.

I could not but believe you true:
Methought, whatever winds should blow,
Our love would live; but that was, ah!
A year ago.

A year ago—a little year!
Who would have thought that we could grow
So far apart, so cold, as this—
A year ago?

"THE LITTLE LESS"

You think you look at me as once you used to do,
When first into my waiting heart you came?
Nay, dear—altho' that look is tender still, it is
Not *quite* the same—ah, no, not quite the same.



You think you speak to me as once you used to do
When first your voice made music of my name ?
Nay, dear—altho’ the music still is there, it is
Not *quite* the same—ah, no, not quite the same.

You think you smile at me as once you used to do
When first that smile set all my soul aflame ?
Nay, dear—altho’ the love-light lingers still, it is
Not *quite* the same—ah, no, not quite the same.

You think you love me still as once you used to do ?
Dream not, dear heart, I breathe a word of blame ;
But, oh, altho’ you *think* you love, I know it is
Not *quite* the same—ah, no, not quite the same.

AMID THE FLOWERS

I SAW her *first* amid the flow’rs
The merry May-month brings,
What time the hedgerows bloom again
And every throstle sings.
My Queen of May ! this heart of mine
Went out to meet thine there,
And vowed that Earth, with all its flow’rs,
Held nothing half so fair.

I saw her *last* amid the flow’rs,
But, ah, no longer May ;
The skies of other—wintry—hours
Had brought a darker day—

Dark to the earth, yet darker still
 To this sad heart of mine,
 For, oh, my Queen, they snatched away
 That sunny soul of thine.

So still she lay, so peacefully—
 All save the sweet-drawn breath—
 I could but think she only slept,
 I could not call *that* Death.
 The flow'rs she loved were all around,
 And clustered in her hair ;
 Yea, still for me, the wintry earth
 Held nothing half so fair.

TO AN IVY LEAF

SWEETEST symbol of my love—
 Let a life's devotion prove ;
 Dainty leaf, my herald be,
 Take my vow—" *I cling to thee.*"

Summer may expand its heat,
 Winter's storms around thee beat ;
 Still, midst change, thou changest never ;
 So my love—'twill bloom for ever.

Ivy, on thy verdant wing
 Bear the song thou lov'st to sing ;
 Typic leaf, thou art to me
 Emblem sweet of Constancy.

* * * * *



Life on me its sweets may show'r
To beguile the passing hour ;
Pleasure's voice, with shallow ring,
Her alluring charms may sing ;

Or Adversity may bring
Oft its sharp and chast'ning sting,—
Still, my heart, may thou e'er be
Rich in Love's calm Constancy.

LULLABY

GONE, gone is the daylight, fast falleth the night,—
Rest, rest thee, my baby, let naught thee affright ;
 In sleep's sweet caressing
 Its Angels of Blessing
Are waiting to crown thee with dreams of delight.

Rest, rest thee, my baby, for Mother will stay
To chase all the fears of the darkness away :
 When morning shall wake thee,
 Then Mother will take thee
To share once again the delights of the day.

God bless thee, my sweeting ! He watches above
And tenderly keeps thee, my little white dove ;
 No danger can harm thee,
 Nor aught can alarm thee,
While He wraps thee round with the light of His love.

Sleep, little one, sleep
Till morning shall peep ;
While Mother is by thee
No hurt can come nigh thee,
So sleep, baby, sleep.

A WISH

O FRIEND of mine, I will not wish for you
Uncloaked joys—that skies be always blue ;
Nor that you may but feel the glow and glare
Of summer suns, whose dazzling brightness ne'er
Is tempered by the kind, refreshing shade
By some fleet-passing cloudlet's curtain made.

Nay, rather do I wish you tempered joys—
Th' enduring happiness that never cloy,
With just so much of Sorrow's saddening shade
As He, who hath both Grief and Gladness made,
Shall deem sufficient for your spirit's need,
Who seek the life that is the " life indeed."

MESSAGE

DEAR my friend, my blessing o'er you !
Take my kindest thought ;
Shrine within your breast the message
Truest heart hath brought.



Live for Truth—the rarest treasure
That the soul may know—
Truth in all things, high or lowly :
Scorn the tinselled show.

Live to Hope—nor e'er, desponding,
Woo a wild despair ;
Tho' the skies of Life should lower,
Overcast with Care.

God's fair sun, that shineth ever,
Will, in His good day,
Chase the gath'ring gloom of sorrow,
Pack Care's clouds away.

Live for Faith : let not thy spirit
Lose its loving trust
In thy brother and the Father,
Merciful and just.

Live to love, and let thy loving,
Great as man's can be,
Be the Christ-love, pure and selfless—
Sweetest charity.

" PASSING AWAY "

(Written October 5, 1892. The evening papers told to-night the sad news that Lord Tennyson was slowly " passing away.")

PASSING away from Earth's turmoil,
Seeking a brighter sphere,
Shades of the eve-tide around him,
Low lies the Poet-Seer.

Darkly Earth's shadows are falling,
Soon to enfold the clay ;
While the awakening spirit
Greets the fast-dawning Day.

Feebler and feebler the pulse-beat,
Breathing is faint and low,
Trembles the fast-parting spirit,
Lingers the dying glow.

Dying !—yet leaving for ever
Wealth that shall ne'er decay,
Riches that Earth's sons shall treasure
Treasure and love for aye ;

Thoughts that the world shall ennoble,
Gems of the purest ray :
These shall abide, and abiding,
Never shall pass away.



Bard ! Nevermore shall thy pulses
 Thrill with the poet's fire,
Ne'ermore thy deft fingers wander
 Over thy tuneful lyre.

Silent, the voice that made music,
 Subtle and sweet—yet strong ;
Muses their tear-drops shall sprinkle,
 Weep, to embalm thy song.

Wedded to blisses eternal,
 Thine be the Poet's dow'r ;
Sleep, but awake, and awaking,
 Bloom as the dew-kissed flow'r.

Pass, then, faint-fluttering spirit,
 Pass on thy Heavenly way,
Out of Earth's darkening shadows,
 Into the Dawning Day !

PASSED

October 6, 1892

EVENTIDE has come : the shadows all have darkened
 into gloom ;
Life's fair sun has sunk, and sinking, brought the dark-
 ness of the tomb.

(Yet, tho' Earth shall claim her kindred, hidden in
sepulchral gloom,
Fair and bright the spirit's morning sheds its halo
o'er the tomb.)

He has passed from out the shadows—passed he as
his Hero-King ;
Silv'ry moonbeams, playing o'er him, saw the spirit's
quickenings.

Dusky barge, all sable-mantled, with its dark-robed,
mystic throng,
Bore him o'er the moon-kissed waters to the Paradise
of Song ;—

To the Island-Vale that nestles far beyond where
mortals tread,
To the Heavenly Avilion, Home of the Awakened
Dead.

Prophet-Poet ! Let the music of thy spirit-song en-
twine
Every impulse that ennobles, blend the Human and
Divine.

Spirit of the Age that bore thee ! Chief among the
souls that sang !
High above the tuneful measures thine own mighty
music rang.



Oh ! I know not how to mourn thee,—what would
idle tears avail ?

Yet, within the heart's deep chambers, hear the weep-
ing spirit's wail.

Truly thou the Book hast opened ; * now, upon its
deathless page,
Thou may'st read the great dark secrets of the Last
Dread Pilgrimage.

Still, thou livest in the music of the songs thy fancy
wove—

Flow'rets that shall bloom for ever, watered by a
nation's love.

VIA DURIOR

THERE'S a way that is straiter than Love's—

A path that is harder to tread ;

'Tis bestrewn all with thorns, and besmeared

With the blood of the feet that have bled—

That have bled for the holier joys

Of that Way of the Dutiful Heart,

The deep joys of the passion and pain

That reckon not how bitter the smart.

'Tis the Way by Renouncement made blest,

Thro' surrender of heart and of hope,

For the pangs it would save to the soul

Of another too feeble to cope

* "I have opened the book."—*The poet, on his death-bed.*

With the burden of Love unfulfilled,
And the sorrow of solitary hours;
Too weak for the way where the thorns
Are so thicklier bestrewn than the flow'rs.

But few only there be that have trod
This way of the Dutiful Heart;
The many have walked in the way
That knows naught of the thorns and the smart.
They have followed where Self has allured,
Led along by its vanishing gleam,
To awake to the ashes and dust
Of a joy that was born of a dream.

But the love that is deeper than death,
In the faith that is stronger than fate,
Turns aside from its dearer desire
To the hope that can labour and wait;
From the passionate longing that looks
For the joys of that dearer desire
To the Way of the Dutiful Heart,
To a love that is holier and high'r.

For this love that is holier and higher
Is the love that surrenders its love
To a duty that lives by the law
Of a love that is born from above.
And tho' sorrow and sighing be there,
And the thickly-strewn thorns and the smart,
Not a joy in the world can compare
With the joys of the Dutiful Heart.



DEDICATION HYMN

HERE, Lord, in faith we gather
 To dedicate to Thee
 A temple where Thy spirit
 May dwell continually.
 From out our hearts' pure passion
 These hallowed walls we raise,
 Set deep in Aspiration,
 Thanksgiving, Joy, and Praise.

Be this Thy house, O Father,
 Thyself its Lord alone ;
 Be Faith its firm foundation,
 And Love its corner-stone ;
 And o'er its wide-flung portals
 Hope's word of cheer engrav'n :
 " Lo, here, O wayworn pilgrim,
 A gateway into Heav'n."

Here may the soul that seeks Thee,
 Through penitence and prayer,
 Find, folded in Thy mercy,
 The Love that lightens care ;
 And to each waiting spirit
 Grant here, O God, to see
 Ways of diviner service
 And holier life in Thee.

Lord, in Thy Name we laboured,
And still for Thee would toil,
Seeking yet further vessels
To hold Love's holy oil.
Yet not to us the glory
That hallows all our days,—
Thine, Thine alone, O Father,
The honour and the praise !

HARVEST HYMN

FATHER, in faith we scattered wide
The promise of the Spring,
To wait in hope the golden hour
Of Autumn's harvesting.
All-trustfully we cast our seed
Within the furrow's fold ;
And now the fruits are gathered in
In sheaves of garnered gold.

Here in Thy temple, Lord, we lay
These fruits Thy grace has given—
Sweet symbols of Thy constant care,
The bounteousness of Heav'n.
Oh, teach us gratitude,—Oh, teach
Our hearts to hymn Thy praise,
Who bring'st to us, this trusted time,
The hope of "many days."

HARVEST HYMN

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All glory, then, to Him who gives
The promise of the Spring,
The seed-time and the appointed hour
Of Autumn's harvesting.
So may we trust our spirit's Spring
While the swift seasons roll,
That we in plenteousness may reap
The harvest of the soul.

SONNETS

MUSA CONSOLATRIX

SAY, what is Poesy ? It is the breath
Of Man's diviner being—the soul in him
Seeking, amid Earth's mists and shadows dim,
A nobler utt'rance ;—'tis the Voice that saith :
“ Naught that thou lov'st can know the taste of death ;
For thou art kindred with the Seraphim,
And hold'st affinity with the Cherubim,
Soul, that among these sorrows sojourneth.”

And so it comes with healing to the heart
Wayworn, or wounded in the battle-press ;
It walks with them who long have bravely trod
Life's sunless paths and felt the thorn-pricks' smart :
It comes to gladden, sanctify, and bless,
With thoughts of Peace and Love—of Heav'n and
God.

“VERITATIS INSATIABILIS FAMES”

“If God held in His right hand All Truth, and in His left hand simply the ever-active endeavour after Truth—even with the condition that I should ever err—and said to me, ‘Choose!’ I should humbly incline to His left, and say, ‘Father, give! Perfect Truth is, surely, for Thee alone!’”—LESSING.

Lo, as I walked the shining paths of Day,
Behold, God stood my 'mazed eyes before ;
His right hand held All Truth ; His left hand bore
The deathless longing for Truth's perfect way—
Th' insatiate hunger of the craving clay
For golden grain from that all-priceless store ;
And in the hush that stole my spirit o'er,
“Child of My love,” He said, “choose, while you may.”

With low-bowed spirit to His left I bent,
And murmured, “Father, give—Oh, give, I pray,
That which Thy left hand holds, that so I may
Live ever in divinest discontent.”

* * * * *

Yea, Father, be the Eternal Hunger mine :
Truth perfect and complete alone is Thine !

THE BIRTH OF PAIN

“TOGETHER sang the morning stars, and all
The sons of God shouted for joy,”—for yet
Joy was the lord of life. Her eyes unwet
With tears for what had vexed, or might befall

Man's soaring soul, Earth wore her coronal
 Of Gladness all-unchallenged, proudly set
 Upon a brow where Love and Longing met
 In that embrace no shadows need appal ;—

Till, in an unblest hour, with heart aflame,
 Into that Garden of the Primal Bliss
 Stole Evil Desire, and, with a passionate kiss,
 Wooed Earth from Heaven, and gave her soul to
 shame . . .

Then, lo ! a cry Joy strove to still in vain :
 Earth heard the cry, and said : “ Its name is—Pain.”

MATED EARTH

It came upon me in a dream by day :
 A vision of the lone World-Spirit, lost
 On Time's wide waste of waters tempest-tossed,
 As one who sought, but still mistook, her way ;
 Fated—'twould seem—from age to age to obey
 The unpitying edict of a love star-crossed,
 Darkling she wandered—toil and tears, the cost ;
 The crown, Earth's ransom from the senses' sway.

I looked again : Night still,—no stars, no sun ;
 A second spirit trod that toilsome way :
 'Twas patient Heaven sighing out his soul
 Towards where Earth's shadows hid the waiting Day.

* * * * *

When, lo ! I saw the o'er-clouding shadow roll ;—
 Love's quest was ended,—Earth and Heaven were one.



A POET'S QUEST

I SEARCHED the wide world over for a friend,
 And wore my heart away upon the quest.
 Outcried my soul, an-hungering for rest :
 " How long, world-weary one, before the end ?
 How many more sad summers wilt thou spend
 In journeyings vain, with answering love unblest,
 Or sojourning, a disappointed guest,
 'Mid hearts with which thine own hath striven to
 blend ? "

Then when my travel's sun had all but set,
 I chanced upon a heart that spake to mine
 In tones it leaped to hear, for never yet
 Such music as that symphony divine
 Had sung thro' all my soul ; our spirits met,
 And our twin-hearts henceforth did intertwine.

HAMLET

A CLOUD had cast its gloom athwart the sun ;—
 'Twas such a sun as smiles on summer days—
 Proud in its wild, warm wealth of liquid rays—
 From skies all azure, its race scarce begun ;
 But fast upon its track the Storm-Fiend flew
 And shut the dazzling Day-God from my eyes ;
 Till deepest gloom enshrouded all the blue,
 And rosiest smiles were drowned in tears and sighs.

E'en so with thee, my tender, pensive Dane :—
 When all seemed fairest, and the day was young,
 The shadows fell, and Grief, 'mid tears and pain,
 Despoiled the temple where sweet Hope had hung
 Her golden lamp to light thy spirit's way ;—
 And foulest Night enwrapped the fairest Day.

TO H. A. S.*

No "*moment's* monument," † *this* sonnet-rhyme—
 Tho' such, I grant, to give the verse its due,
 It should be ; yet 'tis better to be true
 To Truth itself, were never so sublime
 A fourteen-lines' memorial of that time.
 So let me rather those *seven days* review,
 Of careless vagabondage 'neath the blue—
 And grey—of Devon's skies, when—hearts a-chime
 With mutual loves, and caring not a jot
 For carking cares left far behind—we tramped
 O'er hill and dale, by cliff and combe, and "camped"
 Just where we liked, weary with the hot
 Day's march ;—on Mem'ry's page how clearly
 stamped,
 Each hope re-born, each well-remembered spot !

* The late Harry A. Spurr, author of *A Cockney in Arcadia*, *Stories from the Plays of Alexandre Dumas*, etc.

† "A sonnet is a moment's monument."—D. G. ROSSETTI.




TO J. R. T.

HAIL ! gentle friend, who at that crystal spring
 Whence well perennial waters meekly pure
 Hast long time drunk, and findest healing sure
 For ills that vex the spirit's worshipping ;—
 In his great name who, in rare tones, did sing
 The song thou lovest most and shall endure,
 For that its high-pitched strain must e'er allure
 To loftier life—my little lay I bring.

And tho' from out the lowland vales of Song
 My verse arise, and born in quiet nooks
 Of Youthful Contemplation, yet its strong
 Clear note of love to thee amid thy books
 Thy dear companions, will as welcome be
 As tho' it breathed divinest poesy.

AT RUSKIN'S GRAVE

" *There is no wealth but LIFE.*" How truly said,
 Prophet, who fill'dst these our degenerate days
 With burning scorn of those unlovely ways
 Which we—poor fools !—had learnt and loved to tread !
 And tho' we name thee 'mong the silent dead,
 And o'er thy hearse our fond memorials raise,
 We, in the light that round thy spirit plays,
 Reap the rich largess that sweet spirit shed.



No wealth but life !—that wealth was surely thine —
 Wealth won by walking in the ways of God
 In all-unselfish service of thy kind :
 And I, who fain would have that wealth for mine,
 Will follow in the way that thou hast trod—
 Way of the larger heart, the purer mind.

SPES CONSOLATRIX

*" Only so far afflicted that we live
 Desiring without hope."*—DANTE.

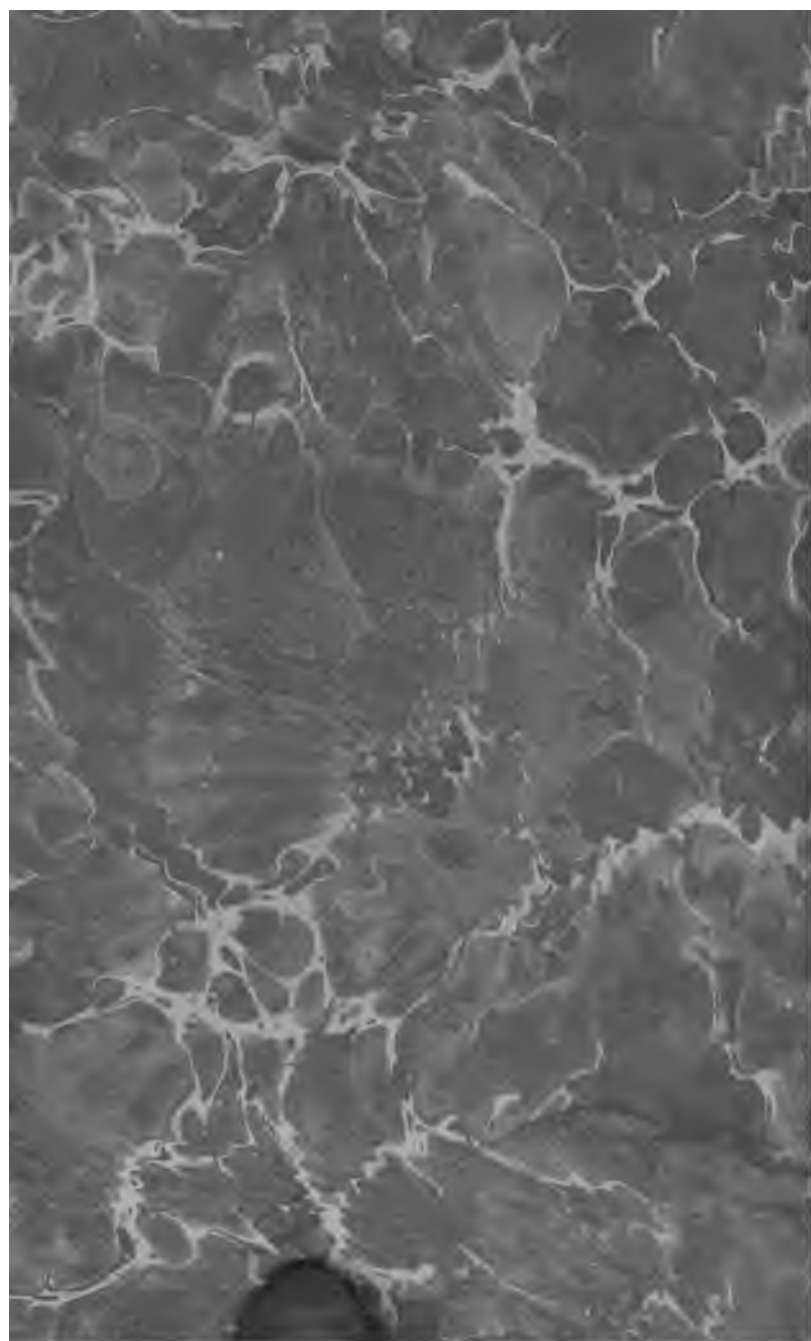
The Heart's Lament :

Woe to the heart that dreams a deep desire,
 Yet may not hope, how dear soe'er it longs !
 Of all the sorrows ever shrined in songs
 That to the strings of his impassioned lyre
 E'er leaped from out the Poet's heart of fire—
 Of cruel Love's immedicable wrongs—
 The saddest those to whose wild strain belongs
 The wail of souls that helplessly aspire.

Hope's Answer :

" Peace, troubled heart ! Still thy impatient strife.
 What tho' the clouds upon thy spirit lour,
 And the dear wished-for haven seems never nigh'r,
 Be this thy thought : Earth's is not all our life ;
 Beyond, above, awaits the perfect hour,—
 Heaven's life of love shall crown thy deep desire."





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